

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

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AID:MHUNTINGTON (INFO)
-----057506 200621Z /23
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY TUNIS

S E C R E T STATE 211396

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFPR, TS, US

SUBJECT: HEDDA-SAUNDERS MEETING, AUGUST 18

1. ASSISTANT SECRETARY SAUNDERS MET WITH TUNISIAN AMBASSA-
DOR HEDDA AUGUST 18 AT LATTER'S REQUEST

2. HEDDA RAISED TWO QUESTIONS REGARDING BILATERAL ISSUES:

-- POLITICAL SUPPORT FROM DEPARTMENT RE POSSIBILITY OF
GOT'S INAUGURATION OF ENGLISH SPEAKING HIGH SCHOOL(S)
WITHIN TUNISIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM FOR BRIGHT STUDENTS,
WHICH WOULD ULTIMATELY LEAD TO INCREASED NUMBER OF
EDUCATED TRILINGUAL TUNISIANS; AND

-- PRESENT STATUS PL-480 SUPPLEMENTARY ASSISTANCE.

3. SAUNDERS SAID HE THOUGHT DEPARTMENT WOULD CERTAINLY
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SUPPORT IDEA OF ENGLISH SPEAKING SCHOOLS SINCE IT FIT IN
WITH OVERALL U.S. POLICY OF STRENGTHENING PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE
TIES. HE LAUDED GOT'S IMAGINATIVE PROPOSAL. SAUNDERS
SUGGESTED TECHNICAL DETAILS BE DISCUSSED WITH AID OR OTHER
EDUCATION EXPERTS. (NOTE - HEDDA SAID PROPOSAL OF ENGLISH
SPEAKING SCHOOLS HAS BEEN GIVEN TOP-LEVEL GOT APPROVAL BUT
REQUESTED IT REMAIN VERY PRIVATE, ESPECIALLY IN TUNIS DUE

TO SENSITIVITY OF ISSUE "AMONG CERTAIN TUNISIAN CIRCLES.")

4. SAUNDERS THEN BRIEFED HEDDA ON CAMP DAVID RATIONALE, WHICH WAS AIMED AT PREVENTING A THREATENING IMPASSE FROM MATERIALIZING. AN ACTIVE NEGOTIATING FORUM IS NECESSARY, AND CAMP DAVID WILL BRING IT TO THE CHIEF OF STATE/HEAD OF GOVERNMENT LEVEL DESPITE THE ADMITTED RISKS. SAUNDERS SAID CAMP DAVID DISCUSSIONS WOULD CONCENTRATE ON BROAD ISSUES AND WOULD AIM AT DEVELOPING AN ACCEPTABLE NEGOTIATING FRAMEWORK FOR THE FUTURE. WE HOPE THERE WOULD BE BASIS LAID TO INDUCE JORDANIANS AND PALESTINIANS AND EVENTUALLY SYRIANS TO JOIN FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS.

5. HEDDA STATED THAT TUNISIA'S MODERATE POSITION IS WELL KNOWN AND THAT HE HAD JUST RECEIVED PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA'S RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S LETTER. HEDDA THOUGHT BOURGUIBA'S LETTER WAS "VERY GOOD" AND WOULD BE WELCOMED BY U.S. HEDDA WILL HAVE LETTER DELIVERED TO DEPARTMENT SHORTLY. VANCE

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